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Paul Shapiro is a professional search marketer that loves to take both a technical and creative approach to SEO.
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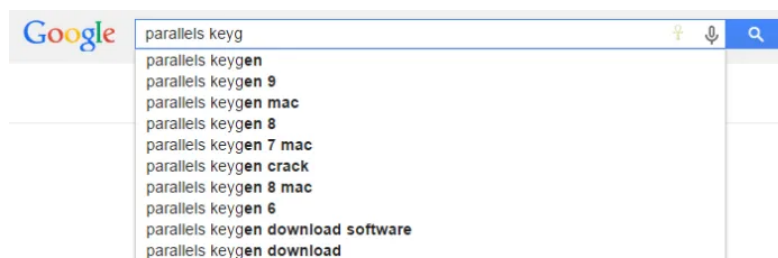
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in Search Engine Optimization

Parallels' Content Marketing Strategy for Outranking Software Pirates

The software company Parallels, makers of awesome virtual machine software for your Mac, had a problem:

Thousands upon thousands of searches are being made by people trying to pirate their software, using a myriad of variations of “parallels key generator” and “parallels product key”.



So, Their SEO team devised a solution...

They created a piece of interactive content designed to capture some of these searches, and maybe, just maybe try to convert them into a sale or lead.

It's a pretty cool idea. Let's examine it.

Parallels' interactive content: Targeting Keygen Pirates with the Parallels KeyGenie

The landing page is found directly on the root domain at <http://www.parallels.com/keygenie>. Good.

It's a modern take on Akinator, the web genie, sort of a 20-questions game designed for the web that used to be very popular.

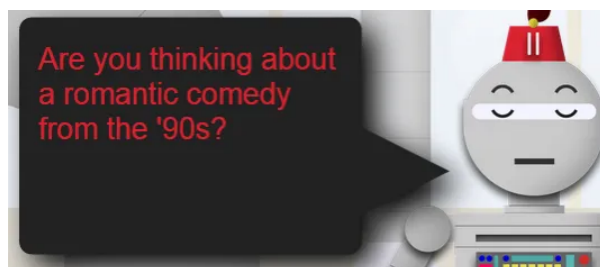


The robot on the page prompts you, asking if you are looking for a “product key or a key generator for a Parallels product”.

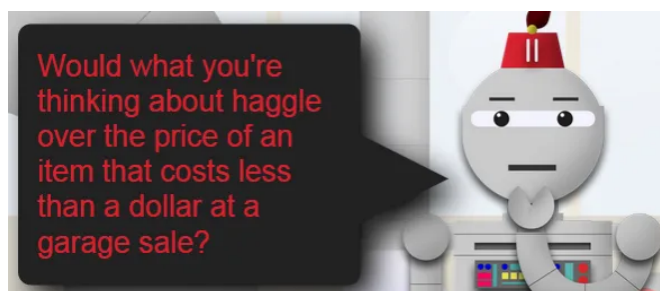
The Parallel KeyGenie entices you:

*"Think you have what it takes to STUMP me and WIN a product key?
If I can't guess what you're thinking in 5 questions, a key may be yours.
Do you accept my challenge?"*

It starts to ask you some questions, indicating that it might actually be playing twenty questions.



They are quite witty at times...



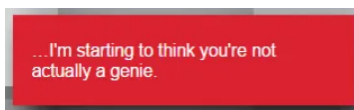
(commentary on software piracy much?)

And then they start with the lead-generation stuff, gently nudging you to purchase the product rather than pirating it ...

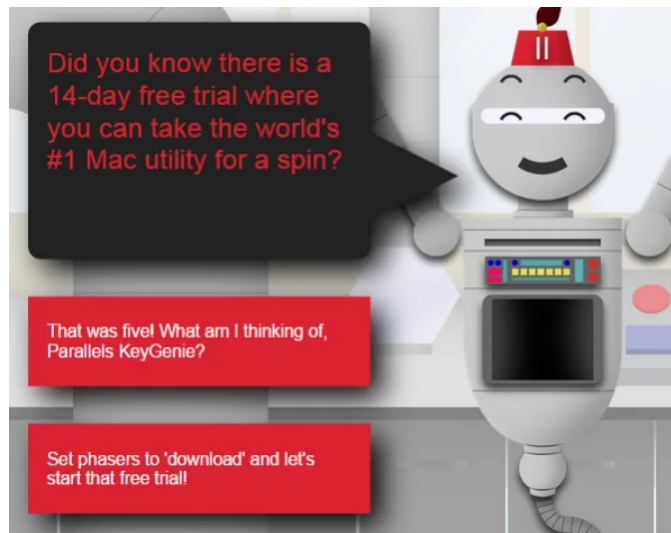
"Did you know valid product registration gives you free updates with bug fixes and improved features?"



It continues on with similar prompts...



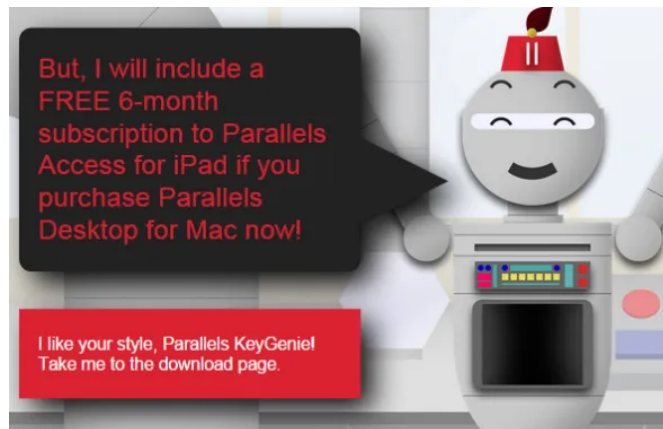
The genie is persistent with the calls-to-action...



but he will ultimately let you down...



but don't worry, you'll get perks with the purchase of Parallels Desktop if you buy now 😊

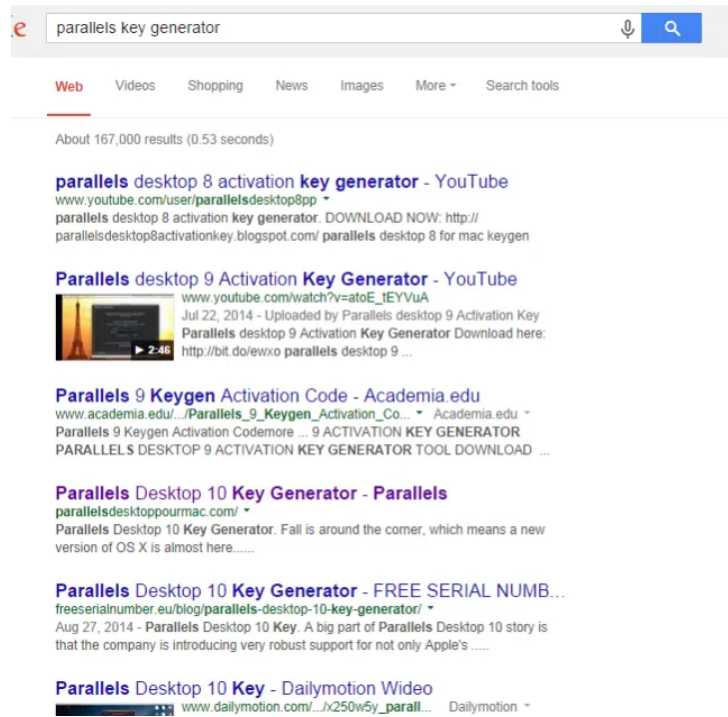


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Okay, it's very clever content, the idea is cute, but there's one problem....

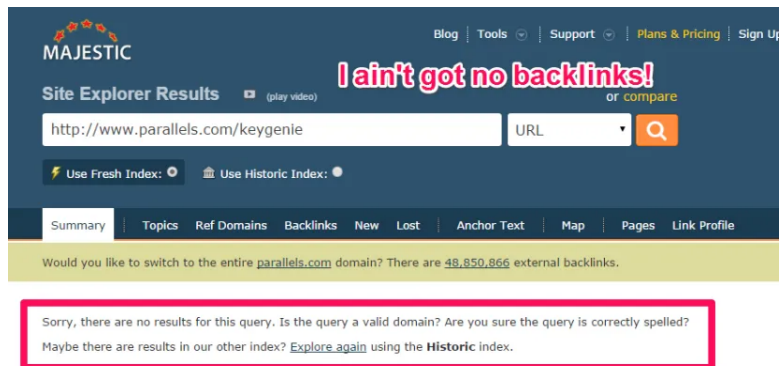
**It isn't ranking!**

Man, look at the SERP for "Parallels Key Generator":



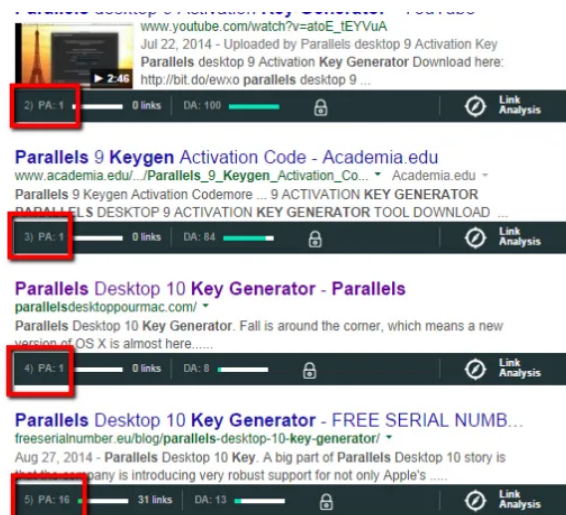
It's pretty heavily dominated by affiliate marketing sites and parasite-SEO. Some very blackhat stuff!

### Why isn't it working?



They don't have any backlinks! I'm sure once people take notice of this awesome piece of marketing, they'll link to it.

It won't be so hard to outrank the parasite pages.



But, in the meantime, you guys can AT LEAST link to it from your own site!

Jeez. That would be easy enough.

Even though Google is smart enough to pick up on related terms and anchor text will help (once they actually have some links), **they could have done a better job optimizing for keywords on-page.**

I'd probably throw "Parallels Key Generator" into the title tag somewhere.

```
<html>
<head><meta http-equiv="refresh" content="300;url=http://parallels.com/en/keygen/>
<title>Parallels Desktop for Mac KeyGenie: Stump the KeyGenie & Win!</title>
<meta name="description" content="Need a Parallels key? Skip the KeyGenie & Key
<!--[if IE]><![endif]>
```

I'm tracking the ranking in the SERPS on a handful of terms in the keywords. I'll keep this updated if there is any movement.

**Update 03-24-2014** The landing page is ranking in position 1 for "Parallels Key-gen" and "Parallels Key Generator".

| # | Keyword                 | Change | Latest | Best | Search Vol |
|---|-------------------------|--------|--------|------|------------|
| 1 | parallels key           | 0 ↗    | N/A    | N/A  | 90         |
| 2 | parallels keygen        | 0 ↗    | 1 ★    | 1    | 110        |
| 3 | parallels key generator | 0 ↗    | 1 ★    | 1    | -          |
| 4 | parallels product key   | 0 ↗    | N/A    | 6    | -          |

Kudos guys, I'm looking forward to seeing the campaign's results.



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**Peter Nikolow**

October 10, 2014

Parallels isn't only for Mac virtualization company. They also have virtualizers in past for Windows and Linux but discontinued them. You also may used Plesk or Virtuozzo in web-hosting. They are also part of Parallels.

Anyway – idea for hijacking SERP for searches as "keygen" is very clever!

Reply to Peter



**Dennis Seymour**

October 11, 2014

Wow, I've always been a VMware guy but that's pretty awesome.

It might just work...no, it will probably work. Now, they have to invest in some other parasites when it does work lol.

The searchers will still look for torrents but if they get some converts, then it's better than nothing 😊

Great find Paul!

[Reply to Dennis](#)**Tom Blackshire**

October 14, 2014

Cool campaign idea, I hope it does well.

[Reply to Tom](#)**bhavya**

February 14, 2015

All they need to do is change the title and url needs to be /key-generator. Isn't that a quick win?

[Reply to bhavya](#)**Paul Shapiro**

February 18, 2015

Yeah, that would probably help a bit 😊

[Reply to Paul](#)**Adam**

July 3, 2015

Just wanted to quickly mention: do a search for parallels keygen, parallels key generator, etc. and you'll see this Parallels KeyGenie page rank #1.

Pretty awesome work...

[Reply to Adam](#)**Paul Shapiro**

July 3, 2015

I think I indicated the ranking improvements in the March update, but yeah definitely. I'm big fan of what they did here 😊

[Reply to Paul](#)**Patrick**

August 15, 2016

Utter Genius Paul! Great discovery! I was just chatting with a young lady about a similar strategy the other day at a software company. This is such a great twist on not only getting over on pirates but capitalizing on these SERPs as well.

[Reply to Patrick](#) [Write a Comment](#)

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